Archeological Testing at the Proposed Location of the Museum Storage Facility Colonial National Historical Park Yorktown, Virginia

Allen H. Cooper
National Park Service
Philadelphia Support Office
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Management Summary

Archeological testing to identify the level of effect on potential archeological resources was conducted at the proposed location of a new museum storage facility at Colonial National Historical Park. Located immediately east of the existing maintenance facility, excavation of thirteen shovel tests and one larger excavation unit indicated that the stratigraphy of the area had been heavily compromised by the construction and subsequent demolition of Quarters 211 and a parking turnout. No intact stratigraphy relating to earlier resources was identified, although a single prehistoric artifact was recovered from the western margin of the proposed development area. The testing procedure indicated that construction of the proposed museum storage facility would have no effect on archeological resources.

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Introduction

Colonial National Historical Park has proposed the construction of a new museum storage facility adjacent to the existing maintenance facility, located just west of U.S. Route 17 (Figure 1). The location of the proposed development is the former site of Quarters 211 (Figure 2). Constructed around 1870, Quarters 211 was a five-bay two story dwelling with an Italianate roof. Used for park housing from its purchase in 1931 until the early 1980's, the structure was demolished in 1993. An unpaved parking area was once located adjacent to the existing paved road. It was removed at an unknown date.

The proposed museum storage facility will initially consist of a free standing structure and an adjacent parking area (Figure 3). If additional funds are available in the future, the structure will be expanded northward to a shape resembling an "L".

Lying at an elevation between 62 and 65 feet AMSL, the site lies on a plateau within 1000 feet of Great Run, a tributary of Beaverdam Creek. Although the area appears attractive for prehistoric or historic occupation, no sites have been identified in the area prior to the mid-nineteenth century.

In accordance with the Programmatic Agreement between the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, all actions not conforming with the programmatic exclusions are subject to review by the SHPO and the Advisory Council. Construction of the new museum storage facility constitutes such an action. Within the consultation process, potential effect to archeological resources is a key factor in determining the project's overall effect. To this end, archeological testing was conducted on June 27 and 28, 1994. All work was conducted by the author.

Methodology

All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the Secretary's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation. In the absence of detailed guidelines for Phase I (identification studies) field procedures by the Virginia SHPO, those developed by the Pennsylvania SHPO were used with the exception of halving

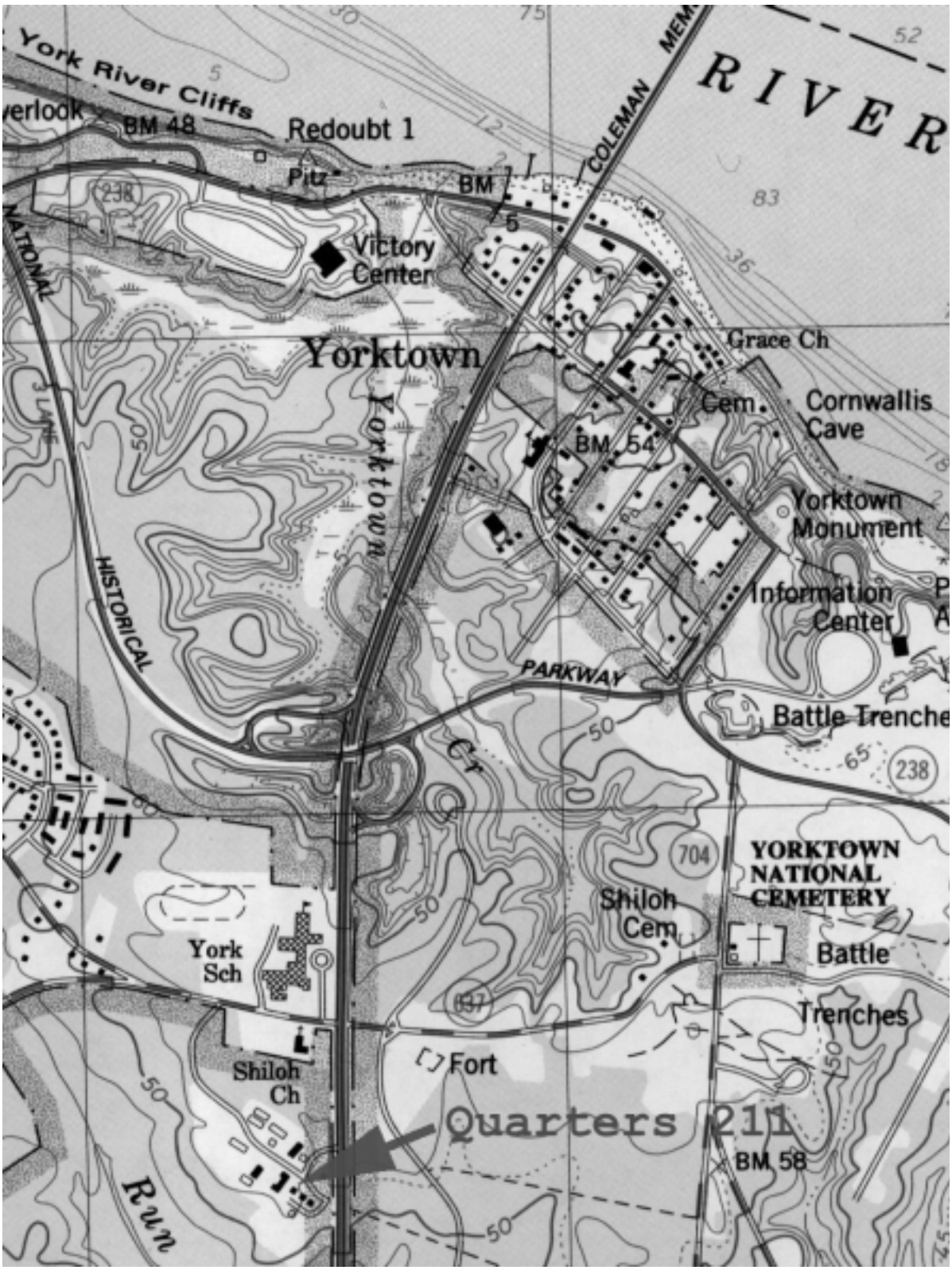

Figure 1: Location of Quarters 211.

North Facade

South Facade

East Facade

West Facade

Figure 2: Photographs of Quarters 211 Prior to Demolition.

the suggested testing interval to produce a tighter density of tests. All soil from undisturbed strata was screened through one-quarter inch hardware cloth. All artifacts from undisturbed contexts were retained.

Excavations measured approximately 1.5 feet wide, with minor deviations resulting from density of the deposits. Excavation continued until sterile subsoil, interpreted as the yellowish brown sandy clay underlying the entire project location, was identified.

Results

Fourteen tests were excavated in the area of proposed development (Figure 4). Individual tests are described in Appendix 1. For ease of comparison, they are here combined into interpretable combinations. Three areas were identified by their stratigraphy. They represent the former location of the parking turnout, the location of Quarters 211, and an irregularly shaped area which had no prior development. It must be emphasized that despite their proximity to each other (25 feet) no two profiles were identical, reflecting the disrupted condition of the soil (Figure 5). Photographs of the individual tests are presented in Appendix 1.

The generalized stratigraphy in the former location of the turnout (Tests 7 and 4) consisted of 3 strata which varied in depth and thickness:

1. Dark Grey humic loam (Munsell color 10YR 4/1). This strata averaged 0.4 feet thick.

2. Very dark grayish brown sandy loam (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) containing cinder, slag, and pulverized shell. This strata averaged 0.45 feet thick.

3. Brown sand (Munsell color 10 YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell color 10YR 5/4). This strata averaged 0.8 feet thick.

The generalized stratigraphy in the former location of Quarters 211 consisted of 3 strata which varied in depth and thickness.

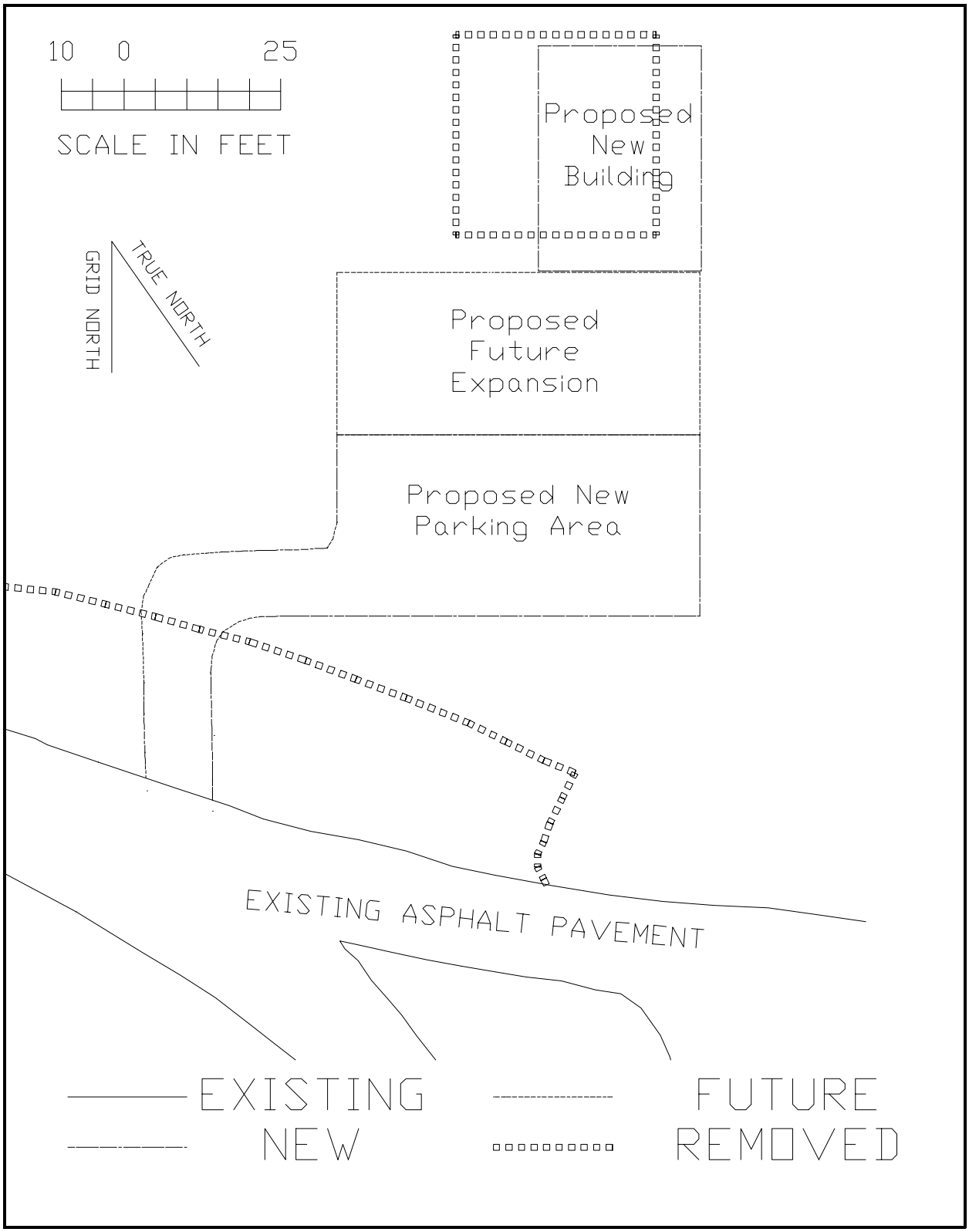

Figure 3: Location of Proposed Construction in Relation to Demolished Structures.

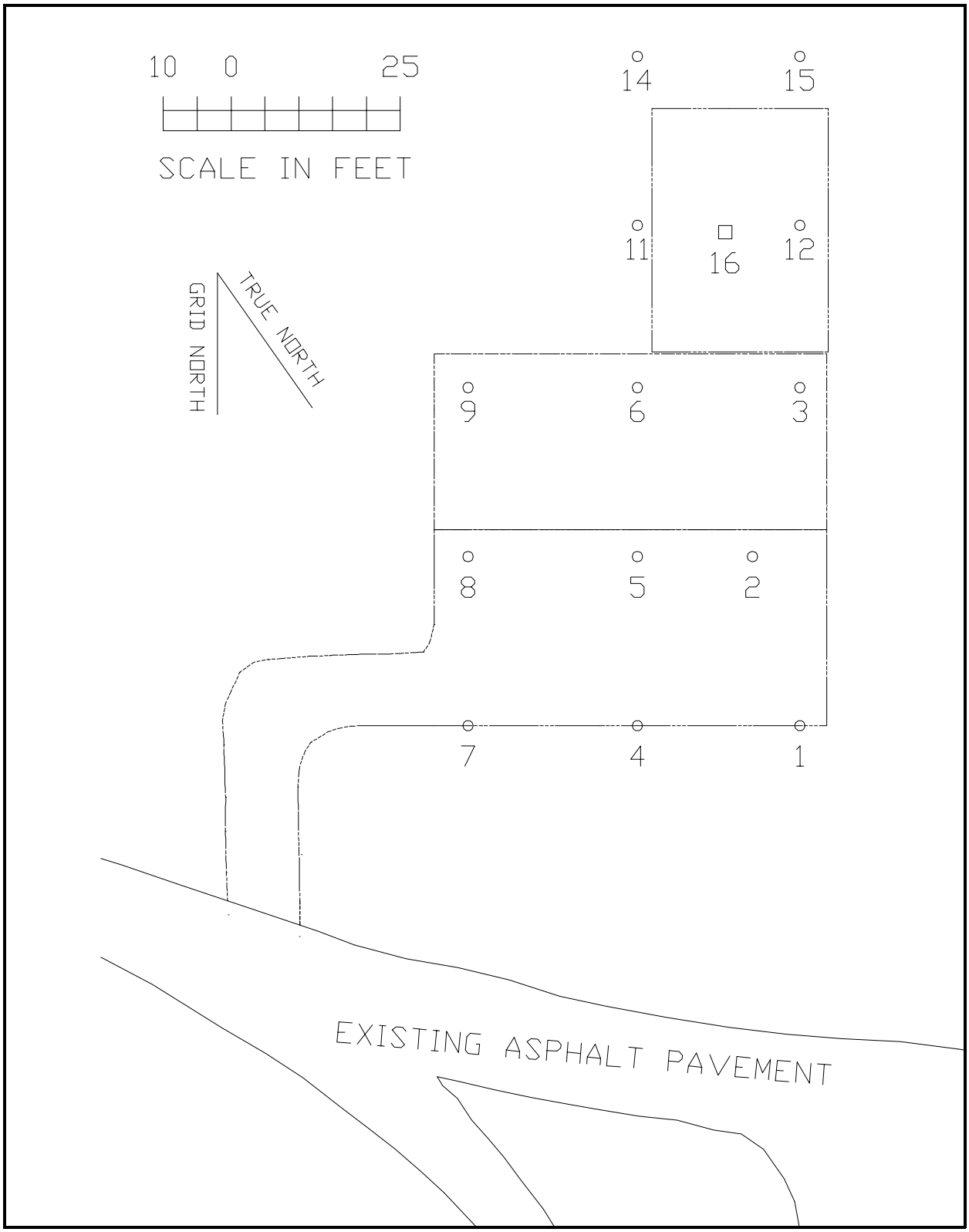

Figure 4: Locaton of Archeological Tests in Relation to Proposed Development.

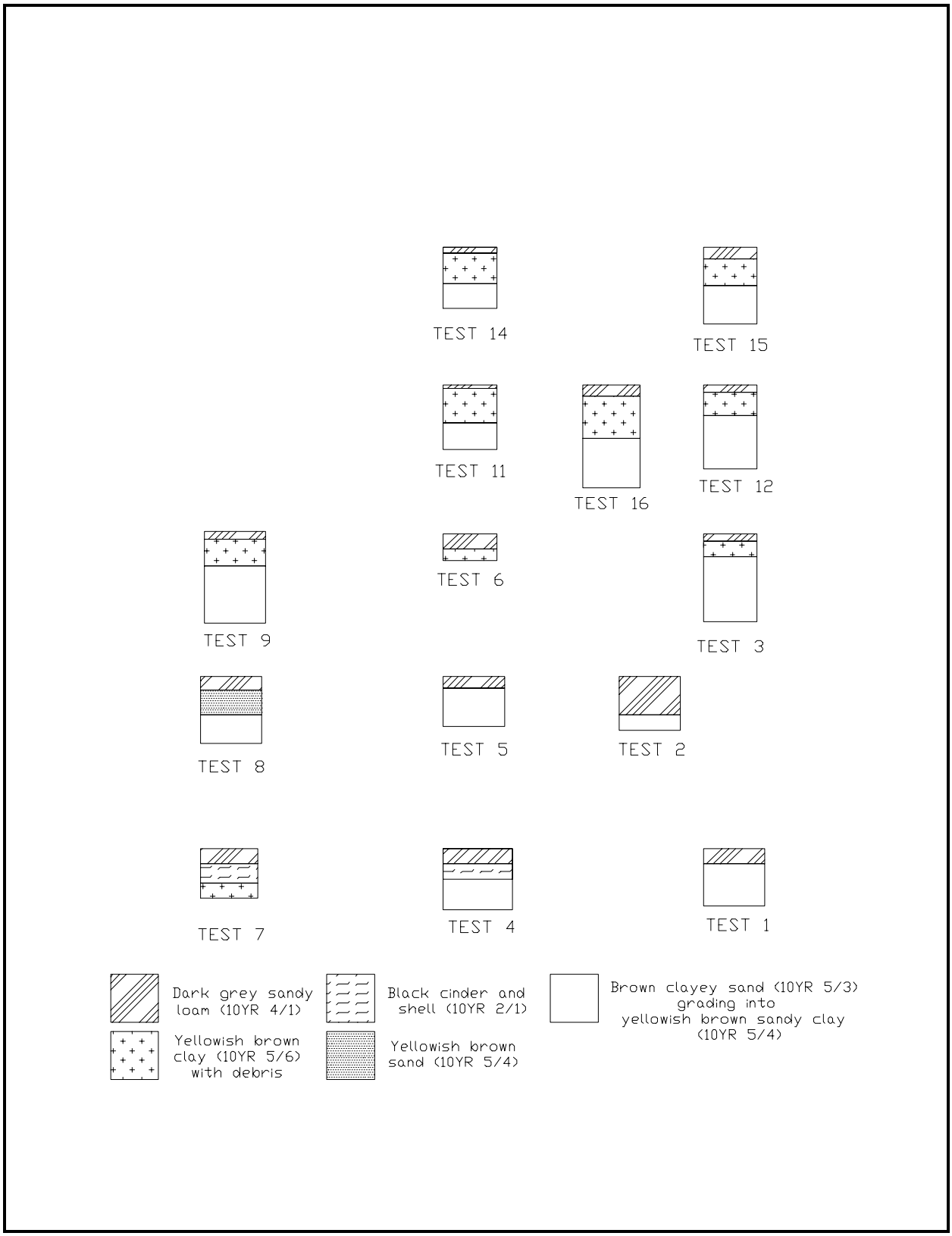

Figure 5: Strata Revealed in Archeological Tests.

These strata appeared in tests 3, 6, 9, 12, 11, and 15 (however, only strata 1 and 3 appeared in test 14):

1. Dark Grey humic loam (Munsell color 10YR 4/1). This strata averaged 0.2 feet thick.

2. Yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell color 10YR 5/6) containing abundant debris from demolition of Quarters 211. This strata averaged 0.6 feet thick.

3. Brown sand (Munsell color 10 YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell color 10YR 5/4). This strata averaged 1.6 feet thick.

Test 3 contained the single artifact which was not recovered from an undisturbed context, a single Madison pp/k from the upper portion of Strata 3.

The soil profiles in the area which did not have documented development exhibited the following stratigraphy, and should be indicative of the original sequence. This area is not contiguous, but was exhibited along the periphery of the proposed current development (Tests 1, 2, 5 and 8).

1. Dark Grey humic loam (Munsell color 10YR 4/1). This strata averaged 0.3 feet thick.

2. Brown sand (Munsell color 10 YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell color 10YR 5/4). This strata averaged 1.6 feet thick.

Conclusions

Excavation of fourteen tests within the proposed location of the museum storage facility, including potential future construction, indicated that virtually the entire area has been altered both by construction and demolition of Quarters 211 and an associated parking turnout.

The original stratigraphy, as identified in Tests 1 and 5, has two strata; a surface layer of dark grey sandy loam (Munsell (10YR 4/1) extending to 0.4 feet, followed by brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4). The depth of this transition varies as illustrated in Figure 3 and reflects the slight elevation

differential across the site.

The strata from areas interpreted as having prior disturbance possess redeposited dark grey sandy loam of recent import immediately above a dense yellowish brown clay layer containing abundant debris from Quarters 211. However, the disturbance from construction/demolition is not uniform, varying from 0.4 feet thick in the least disturbed area (Test 3) to 1.1 feet in Test 16. That this area may have contained, at some time, the potential to possess an archeological entity is suggested by the presence of a Madison pp/k recovered from the top portion of strata 3. However, the lack of recovery of additional prehistoric materials argues the absence of a definable prehistoric occupation.

In summary, the extent of prior disturbance at the proposed location of the museum storage facility, as identified in this testing program, indicated that no significant archeological properties are present at this location and that the project will have no effect on archeological resources.

Appendix I: Test Unit Strata Descriptions

Test 4

0 to 0.4'	Dark gray sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.4 to 0.8'	Black cinder and shell (Munsell 10YR 2/1)
0.8 to 1.6'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 7

0 to 0.4'	Dark gray sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.4 to 0.9'	Black cinder and shell (Munsell 10YR 2/1)
0.9 to 1.3'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 1

0 to 0.4'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.4 to 1.5'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 2

0 to 1.0'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
1.0 to 1.4'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 5

0 to 0.3'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)

0.3 to 1.3'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 8

0 to 0.3'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.3 to 1.0'	Yellowish brown sand (Munsell 10YR 5/4)
1.0 to 1.75'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 9

0 to 0.2'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.2 to 0.9'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
0.9 to 2.2'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 6

0 to 0.4'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.4 to 0.7'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)

Test 3

0 to 0.2'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.2 to 0.6'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
0.6 to 2.1'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 11

0 to 0.05'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.5 to 0.9'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
0.9 to 1.6'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 16

0 to 0.3'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.3 to 1.4'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
1.4 to 2.9'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 12

0 to 0.2'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.2 to 0.8'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
0.8 to 2.2'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 14

0 to 0.2'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.2 to 1.0'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
1.0 to 1.6'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Test 15

0 to 0.3'	Dark grey sandy loam (Munsell 10YR 4/1)
0.3 to 1.0'	Yellowish brown clay (Munsell 10YR 5/6)
1.0 to 2.0'	Brown clayey sand (Munsell 10YR 5/3) grading into yellowish brown sandy clay (Munsell 10YR 5/4)

Appendix II: Photographs

Figure 6: Test 1.

Figure 7: Test 2.

Figure 8: Test 3.

Figure 9: Test 4.

Figure 10: Test 5.

Figure 11: Test 6.

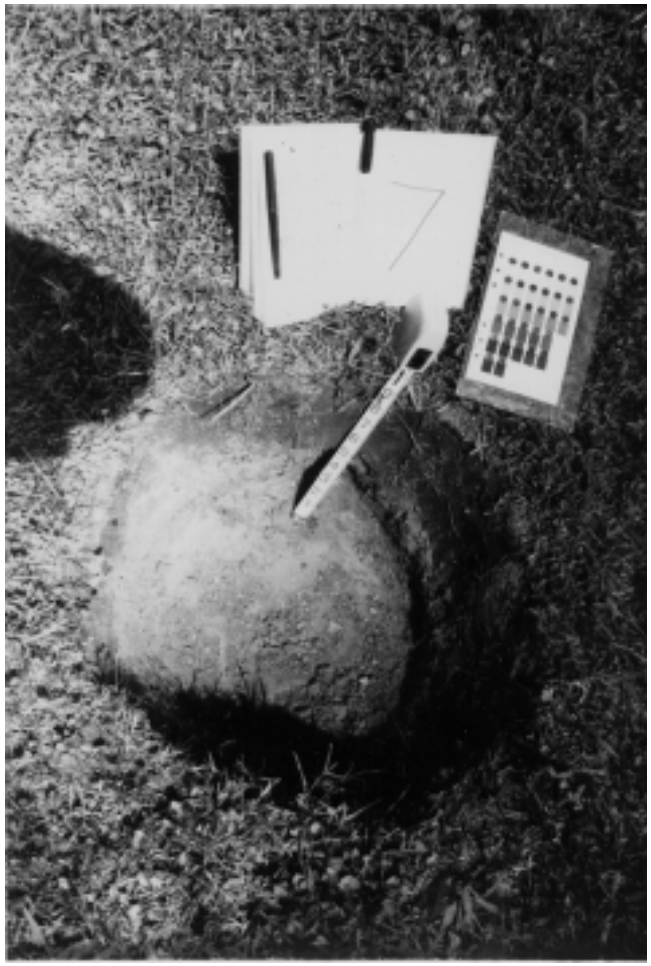

Figure 12: Test 7.

Figure 13: Test 8.

Figure 14: Test 9.

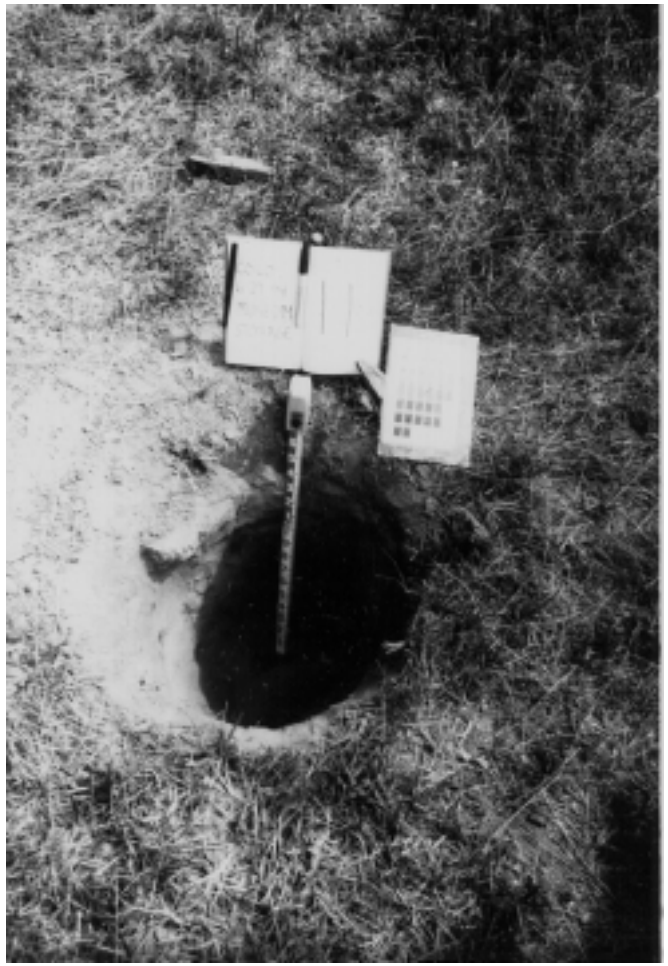

Figure 15: Test 11.

Figure 16: Test 16.

Figure 17: Test 12.

Figure 18: Test 14.

Figure 19: Test 15.

Appendix 3: Artifacts Recovered from Tests

CAT_NMBR	OBJ_NAME	_CNT	DESCR1	DESCR2	OBJ_DATE	MEASURE
COLOY100186	INSULATOR FRAGMENT	1	Insulator fragment.	rim.		WT 9.1G
COLOY100187	NAIL FRAGMENT	1	Nail, cut.	proximal.	AD 1790 TO AD 1990	WT 2.0G
COLOY100188	NAIL	1	Nail, wire.	complete.	AD 1880 TO AD 1990	WT 8.1G
COLOY100189	BRICK FRAGMENT	4	Brick fragment.			WT 5.9G
COLOY100190	MORTAR FRAGMENT	2	Mortar fragment.			WT 9.0G
COLOY100191	SHERD	1	Glass. Green. UID Container.	body.		WT 1.7G
COLOY100192	SHERD	1	Glass. Clear. UID Container	body		WT 1.7G
COLOY100193	SHERD	1	Earthenware, refined. Ironstone.	body.	AD 1813 TO AD 1900	WT 3.6G
COLOY100194	BRICK FRAGMENT	2	Brick fragment.			WT 31.9G
COLOY100195	MORTAR FRAGMENT	1	Mortar fragment.			WT 5.3G
COLOY100196	UID COMPOSITE ARTIFACT FRAGMENT	1	UIC composite artifact fragment.			WT 57.9G
COLOY100197	POINT, PROJECTILE	1	Madison.	complete.		